

Program Proposed Budget								
Budget Item	Base Budget Fiscal 1998	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2000	New Proposals Fiscal 2000	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 2000	PL Base Adjustment Fiscal 2001	New Proposals Fiscal 2001	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 2001	Total Leg. Budget Fiscal 00-01
FTE	5.03	.00	.00	5.03	.00	.00	5.03	5.03
Personal Services	321,214	19,250	0	340,464	19,380	0	340,594	681,058
Operating Expenses	619,795	106,932	0	726,727	119,904	0	739,699	1,466,426
Equipment	8,856	(8,856)	0	0	(8,856)	0	0	0
Total Costs	\$949,865	\$117,326	\$0	\$1,067,191	\$130,428	\$0	\$1,080,293	\$2,147,484
State/Other Special	949,865	117,326	0	1,067,191	130,428	0	1,080,293	2,147,484
Total Funds	\$949,865	\$117,326	\$0	\$1,067,191	\$130,428	\$0	\$1,080,293	\$2,147,484

### Agency Description

The Office of the Consumer Counsel was created by Article XIII, Section 2 of the 1972 Montana Constitution. The office is governed by Title 5, Chapter 15, MCA, and Title 69, Chapters 1 and 2, MCA. The consumer counsel is charged with the duty of representing consumer interests in hearings before the Public Service Commission or any other successor agency. The agency also may initiate, intervene in, or otherwise participate in appropriate proceedings in the state and federal courts and proceedings before federal administrative agencies on behalf of the public of Montana.

### Summary of Legislative Action

All proposed present law adjustments requested by the counsel were approved by the legislature. However, the statewide impacts of reductions to fixed cost rates resulted in a \$420 reduction to the counsel's request. Adjustments included a \$100,000 contingency per year for costs associated with unanticipated caseload and for other adjustments associated with the operation of the office.

Agency Budget Comparison								
Budget Item	Base Budget Fiscal 1998	Executive Budget Fiscal 2000	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2000	Leg – Exec. Difference Fiscal 2000	Executive Budget Fiscal 2001	Legislative Budget Fiscal 2001	Leg – Exec. Difference Fiscal 2001	Biennium Difference Fiscal 00-01
FTE	5.03	5.03	5.03		5.03	5.03		
Personal Services	321,214	340,464	340,464	0	340,594	340,594	0	0
Operating Expenses	619,795	726,937	726,727	(210)	739,909	739,699	(210)	(420)
Equipment	8,856	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Costs	\$949,865	\$1,067,401	\$1,067,191	(\$210)	\$1,080,503	\$1,080,293	(\$210)	(\$420)
State/Other Special	949,865	1,067,401	1,067,191	(210)	1,080,503	1,080,293	(210)	(420)
Total Funds	\$949,865	\$1,067,401	\$1,067,191	(\$210)	\$1,080,503	\$1,080,293	(\$210)	(\$420)

### Executive Budget Comparison

The legislature approved the agency budget as presented, except for a \$420 budget reduction due to reductions made by the legislature to certain fixed cost rates.

### Funding

The sole funding source for the Consumer Counsel is a constitutionally earmarked tax levied on all regulated entities under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission. This state special revenue is \$2.15 million for the 2001 biennium.

Present Law Adjustments		Fiscal 2000	Fiscal 2000	Fiscal 2000	Fiscal 2001	Fiscal 2001	Fiscal 2001
Present Law Description		FTE	General Fund	Total Funds	FTE	General Fund	Total Funds
Statewide Present Law							
Personal Services				19,250			19,380
Inflation/Deflation				886			762
Fixed Costs				2,358			2,373
Total Statewide Adjustments				\$22,494			\$22,515
Present Law Adjustments							
1	Present Law Base Adjustments	.00	0	95,042	.00	0	108,123
2	Fixed Cost Reductions	.00	0	(210)	.00	0	(210)
Total PL Adjustments		.00	\$0	\$94,832	.00	\$0	\$107,913
Present Law Adjustments Total				\$117,326			\$130,428

### Present Law Adjustments

The table above shows the changes made by the legislature to the adjusted base budget. Statewide adjustments are standard categories of adjustments globally applied by the legislature to all agencies. The other numbered adjustments in the table correspond to the narrative descriptions.

DP 1 - Present Law Base Adjustments - The legislature increased state special revenue to establish a \$100,000 contingency each year of the biennium for costs associated with unanticipated workload and for other adjustments associated with the operations of the office.

DP 2 - Fixed Cost Reductions - The legislature reduced state special revenue to adjust fixed costs for rate reductions that had statewide impacts.